



Monitoring Report No. 162

**Monitoring of the consolidation of Harryville Motte (ANT 037:022)
Ballymena
County Antrim**

LICENCE NO.: AE/08/120

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Harryville Motte and Bailey, Ballymena, Co. Antrim

Townland: Ballykeel

SMR No. : ANT 037:022

State Care X Scheduled Other [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: D 1123 0259

County: Antrim

Excavation Licence No. : AE/08/120

Planning Ref / No. : N/A

Dates of Monitoring: 29th September – 9th November 2008

Archaeologist(s) Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

Monitoring was carried out of the invasive groundworks associated with consolidation works at Harryville Motte and Bailey, Ballymena, Co. Antrim. This included the consolidation of the eroded top of the motte, carried out with spoil excavated from several modern 'causeways' that had been constructed at the base of the motte and bailey. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the monitoring exercise.

Type of monitoring:

Supervision of all invasive ground works associated with the consolidation works of the Motte.

Size of area opened: N/A

Current Land Use: Upstanding monument

Intended Land Use: Upstanding monument

Summary

Introduction

Harryville motte and bailey is located on a ridge overlooking the River Braid in Ballymena, Co. Antrim. The monument consists of a steep sided conical motte and a rectilinear raised platform. A ditch surrounds both the motte and bailey and is itself enclosed by a large well preserved bank. The monument has suffered substantial erosion in the past as it has been used as a recreation area for a local housing development. The monument was identified as necessitating consolidation, and this work was carried out during October and November 2008.

Account of the consolidation works

Substantial erosion to the summit of the motte has occurred, primarily due to the use of the monument as a recreation area for a local housing estate. Spoil had been removed from the top of the motte and used to construct several causeways across the ditch at the base of the monument. These were used to provide access to quad bikes and off road motorcycles which further damaged and eroded the side of the motte.

The causeways were mechanically removed under archaeological supervision to ensure that archaeologically sensitive deposits in the ditch were not disturbed. Numerous sherds of modern glass bottle, beer cans and metal debris, along with burnt planks were observed during the removal of the causeways, perhaps testament to the continued use of the monument as a recreation area. These causeways, on average were 0.8m in depth and approximately 2.5-3m in width, and spanned the width of the ditch (upwards of 3m wide). Nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the monitoring exercise.

The spoil removed from the causeways was then moved to the top of the motte by means of a crane. A retaining fence was constructed to produce the desired shape of the top of the motte. The excavation of the support posts for this fence was also monitored, as they had to be dug into the side of the motte itself. Each support hole (12 in total) was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.3m. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed in either the excavation of the causeways or the excavation of the support uprights for the retaining fence.

Conclusions

Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the monitoring exercise at Harryville motte, Ballymena, Co. Antrim. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological work is necessary at the site. Publication of the work is not deemed necessary, save for a short account being submitted to the annual *Excavations Bulletin*.

Archive:

Finds:

N/A

Photographs:

The digital images (30 in total) taken during the evaluation are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: N/A

Signed: _____ Date: _____

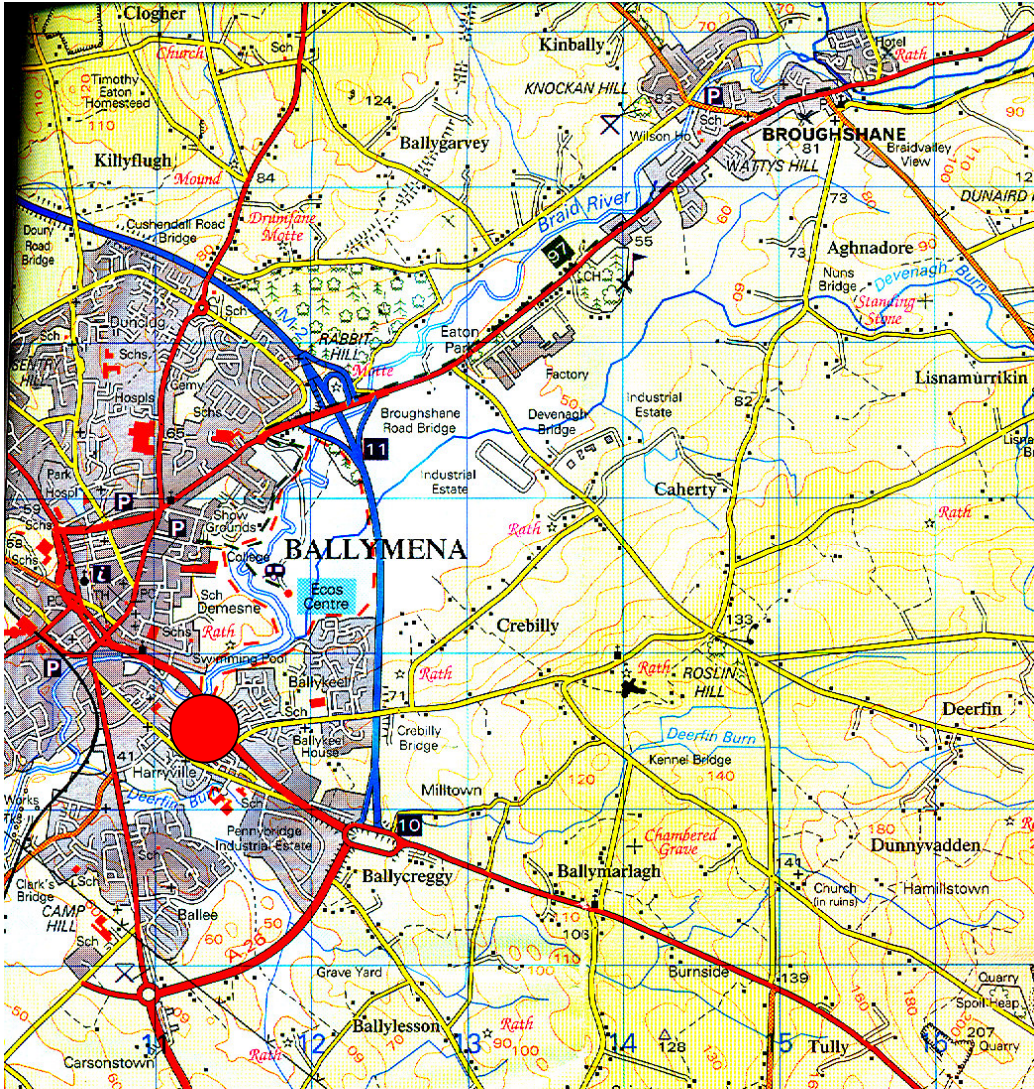


Figure 1: Map showing location of Harryville motte and bailey (Red Dot)



Plate 1: Erosion scars at the top of the motte, looking east.



Plate 2: Erosion scar at the top of the motte, looking west



Plate 3: Modern Causeway across the ditch at the base of the motte, looking east.



Plate 4: Excavation of the causeways by mechanical digger.



Plate 5: Excavation of the holes for the support uprights of the retaining fence, looking west.



Plate 6: One of the causeways following excavation, looking north-east.



Plate 7: view of the top of the motte following the consolidation works. Geo-textile was then spread over the fresh earth and grass seed planted, looking north-east.